



By the Numbers: The State of Literacy in Maine

Understanding the current status of literacy development in the State Maine informs the development of both policy and practice. The information that follows represents reports generated by various entities who track such data. Click on the live links to find full reports and other resources. The bulleted information provides an example of information within each resource.

Early Childhood: Birth Through Preschool

[2015 Kids Count report](#)

- 58% of Maine’s young children are not attending preschool
- 34% live in single-parent households

[Maine Children’s Growth Council.](#)

- One third of Maine’s youngest children are economically disadvantaged.
- 2/3 of children under 5 years old live in families in which all parents work.

[GetReadytoRead.org](#)

- If identified early and given research-based intervention, 90-95 % of children “at risk” for reading failure will become fluent readers.
- Prevention of reading failure can reduce the need for special education services later in a student’s educational life. Special education costs are, on average, double those of general education.

[A Window to the World: Early Language and Literacy Development](#)

- At 16–18 months, when children begin amassing vocabulary, word learning is significantly affected by economic background.
- By age 3, trends in the amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction are well established and suggest widening gaps.
- Children’s academic successes at ages 9 and 10 can be attributed to the amount of talk they hear from birth through age 3½ .

[National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\) Fast Facts](#)

- The percentage of prekindergarten children ages 3–5 read to frequently by a family member (i.e., three or more times in the week preceding the survey) increased from 78 percent in 1993 to 86 percent in 2005.
- There were also increases in the percentage of children whose family members:
 - frequently told them a story (from 43 to 54 percent);
 - taught them letters, words, or numbers (from 58 to 77 percent); and
 - taught them songs or music (from 41 to 54 percent).

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[Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Learning Panel \(NELP\)](#)

- Conventional reading and writing skills that are developed in the years from birth to age 5 have a clear and consistently strong relationship with later conventional literacy skills. Additionally, six variables representing early literacy skills or precursor literacy skills had medium to large predictive relationships with later measures of literacy development.
- These six variables include:
 - alphabet knowledge (AK): knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters
 - phonological awareness (PA): the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent of meaning
 - rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters or digits: the ability to rapidly name a sequence of random letters or digits
 - RAN of objects or colors: the ability to rapidly name a sequence of repeating random sets of pictures of objects (e.g., “car,” “tree,” “house,” “man”) or colors
 - writing or writing name: the ability to write letters in isolation on request or to write one’s own name
 - phonological memory: the ability to remember spoken information for a short period of time

[America’s Early Childhood Literacy Gap](#)

- 37% of children arrive at kindergarten without the skills necessary for lifetime learning.
- Kindergarten language ability accounted for 96% of individual differences in language ability in grades 1 and 2.
- 10 – 15% of children who have difficulty learning to read eventually drop out of high school.

School Age: Pre-kindergarten through grade 8

[2015 Kids Count report \(updated annually\)](#)

- 66% of fourth graders are not proficient in reading.
- 14% live in households where the head of house does not have a high school diploma.

[Maine Data Warehouse](#)

- 44% of students in the bottom 24% did not demonstrate sufficient growth in the 2013/14 school year.

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[Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters \(2010\)](#)

- reinforces that students in low-income schools are much more likely to perform below standards in reading achievement
- 85% of U.S. students in low-income schools scored below proficient and 53% scored below basic on the 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reading assessment.
- In addition, the report reinforces the importance of helping students read proficiently by third grade. There is a strong correlation between poverty, failure to read proficiently, and failure to graduate from high school. Students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely not to graduate high school.

[Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading \(2013\)](#)

- This update to the 2010 report on third-grade reading noted that every one dollar spent in the first four to six years of schooling (including prekindergarten) provides society with a \$8.24 return on investment.

[Early Reading Proficiency in the United States: A Kids Count Snapshot \(2014\)](#)

- On 2013 NAEP fourth-grade reading assessment, the gap in reading proficiency between Maine students from higher and lower income families is 19-27 points. In addition, 80% of U.S. students from low-income families, 93% of dual-language learners, and 89% of students with disabilities scored below proficiency.

[Nation's Report Card 2015](#)

- On the 2015 NAEP, there was no significant difference between the percentage of Maine's 4th grade students who scored at or above proficient in the area of literacy (36%) as compared to the Nation's 4th grade students who scored at or above proficient in the area of literacy (35%). Further, this score was not significantly different from Maine's percentage that in 2013 (37%) and in 1998 (35%).
- On the 2015 Reading NAEP, female 4th grade students in Maine had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 8 points.
- On the 2015 NAEP, there was no significant difference between the percentage of Maine's 8th grade students who scored at or above proficient in the area of literacy (36%) as compared to the Nation's 8th grade students who scored at or above proficient in the area of literacy (33%). Further, this score was not significantly different from Maine's percentage in 2013 (38%) and was smaller than that in 1998 (41%).

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- On the 2015 NAEP, female 8th grade students in Maine had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 10 points.

[Education Indicators for Maine \(2014\): Mitchell Institute Report](#)

- Those children who enter school not kindergarten-ready have lower reading skills at the end of first grade, and 88% of those poor readers will still be poor readers in 4th grade.
- By age 5, a typical middle class child recognizes 22 letters of the alphabet, compared to 9 letters for a child from a low-income family. Full day kindergarten programs help to close such a gap between low income students and their peers; as of 2014, 88% of Maine's school districts offer full day kindergarten programs.
- In Maine, 17% of students who were chronically absent in both kindergarten and 1st grade were reading proficiently in third grade, compared to 64% of those with good attendance.

[You Get More Than What You Pay For: Maine Report from Ready Nation](#)

- In Maine, for every \$1 invested in early care and education in Maine, an additional \$0.78 is generated into the overall economy, for a total of \$1.78 in new spending in the state.
- By fourth and fifth grades, New Jersey children who attended high- quality preschool at ages three and four were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in reading, compared to children who did not attend. They were also 31 percent less likely to need special education and 40 percent less likely to be held back.

Adolescents and Young Adults: High School And College Age

[2015 Kids Count report](#)

- 6% of Maine teens are not in school and not working. This figure has improved slightly since 2008.
- 13% of high school students are not graduating on time.

[The Alliance for Excellent Education: Maine Fact Sheet](#)

If Maine increased its overall graduation rate to 90 percent, the economic benefits from these 2,600 additional graduates would likely include as much as:

- \$27 million in increased annual earnings and \$4.1 million in annual state and local tax revenues;
- 200 new jobs and a \$35 million increase in the gross state product;
- \$56 million in increased home sales;
- \$3.4 million in increased auto sales.

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[College and Career Readiness of U.S. Graduates](#) from Achieve

- For the most part, Maine has a greater need for workers with higher education degrees than there people with degrees.
- 60% of STEM jobs and nearly 40% of non-STEM jobs in Maine require a BA or more. Readiness
- 47% of Maine students met the literacy (ELA) threshold for college readiness.

Adults/Workplace

[Maine Workforce Data Quality Initiative](#)

- For the period 2009-2011, first year wages for those with a post-associate certificate were nearly 50% higher than those with only a high school diploma.

[Technical Report of the Survey of Adult Skills \(PIAAC\)](#)

- People dealing with problems when using information and computer technology often share the following characteristics:
 - The existence of the problem is primarily a consequence of the availability of new technologies.
 - The solution to the problem requires the use of computer-based artifacts (applications, representational formats, computational procedures).
 - The problems are related to the handling and maintenance of technology-rich environments themselves (e.g., how to operate a computer, how to fix a settings problem, how to use the Internet browser in a technical sense).

[Profile of Adult Education Target Population: Maine](#)

- 99,982 adults or 8% of the total state population are adults without a high school credential.
- 70% of adult males with no high school credential are unemployed.

[Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy](#)

- Maine's younger people are well behind Canada, South Korea, and Ireland in securing a college education.
- Maine's economic strength relies on growing industries that will need workers with specialized skill – training after high school – to meet their demands.
- Only one in 25 working-age adults is enrolled in higher education.
- Maine gets an "F" for affordability of its public colleges from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.